World Chronicle

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"PEACE, SECURITY AND NATION BUILDING: EUROPE'S VIEW"

While often working together, Europe and the United States have their differences when approaching a number of international issues, from peace and security to nation building. When these differences arise, is the United Nations the best forum for trying to forge a consensus? And is Europe more multilateralist simply because it doesn't like to invest as much in its own military? In this edition of **World Chronicle** Christopher Patten, the European Union's External Relations Commissioner, analyses the dynamics of the relationship between the EU, the US and the UN by drawing on a number of contemporary examples: from the dilemma over how to deal with Iraq, to the lessons of involvement in the Balkans and in Afghanistan.

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ANNOUNCER: From the United Nations in New York, an unedited interview programme on global issues. This is **World Chronicle.**

And here is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is **World Chronicle**. The European Union: a major participant in the United Nations system, on issues ranging from peace and security to nation-building. But what happens, for example, when Europe and the United States are not in agreement over strategies to be pursued for the common good? And what is the role of the United Nations as a consensus-building forum? With us to discuss the dynamics between the EU, U.S. and U.N. is today's guest, Christopher Patten. He is the European Union's External Relations Commissioner. Joining me to talk to Mr. Patten are Erol Avdovic of Deutsche Welle, and Alistair Lyon of Reuters. Mr. Patten, welcome to **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: Commissioner Patten, everyone is concerned about the Iraq situation in the UN throughout the United States, I am sure throughout the European Union. In an interview not too long ago, you said that fears that Saddam Hussein might supply bacteriological/ chemical weaponry to terrorists are probably somewhat far fetched, and it is not likely to happen. What's the basis for your feeling that this is not really any great threat?

PATTEN: I think they are several threats which Saddam Hussein poses, and plainly his possession of weapons of mass-destruction is the one that should concern us all most of all. But I happen to agree with Brent Scowcroft, the former National Security Advisor to the previous President Bush, that there doesn't seem so far to be any evidence of very close links between Saddam Hussein and some of the terrorists organizations that most concern us. And in a sense it seems rather counter intuitive that a man like Saddam Hussein, who is a control freak to beat all control freaks, would actually place his destiny in the hands of another uncontrollable organization. You give Al-Qaeda or another organization weapons with "made in Baghdad" on them, and you have visited upon you the consequences. And I have always thought and I agree with Brent Scowcroft, I have always thought that that is unlikely, though I suppose possible that if cornered, Saddam Hussein might do it. None of that is to suggest that Saddam Hussein isn't a monster. None of that is to suggest that I don't believe that he is a danger to the region, I don't believe, it is not to suggest that I don't believe he has weapons of mass destruction. But I think one wants to keep the arguments about terrorism separate from the arguments about weapons of mass destruction. And I worry that if you confuse the two, you lose the focus of what we are trying

to do through the United Nations, and you also start to lose support for the long-term campaign on terrorism.

LITTLEJOHNS: We often hear about divisions between the European Union and the United States, and of course divisions within the Union itself. What is the state of the game at the current time?

PATTEN: We take time out from pelting one another with genetically modified tomatoes from time to time to make the point that we share far more than separates us. And that is of course true and you can think of a thousand and one places where we actually act on that. But we haven't seen eye to eye on everything in the last couple of years; in some respects we haven't seen an eye to eye with everything for rather longer. We have been concerned about the debate in the United States, which I didn't make up about unilateralism versus multilateralism. The suggestion that somehow we are multilateralist in the European Union because we are wimps and we actually depend on a leader, which is prepared to be unilateralist in order to guarantee our security. I think that that is an argument, which is important for us in Europe. I don't think we are ever going to be anything other than multilateralist, and when it has come to things like Kyoto or the International Criminal Court, I think we've rightly moved on from simply criticizing United States to trying to take our own share of responsibility. I think grumbling about the United States is not the same as having a foreign policy, and if you are trying to develop a grown up relationship, then you have to recognize that you won't always agree. Winston Churchill said to the problem with allies was that they tended to develop opinions of their own. And I am sure that the US understands that it has allies and partners not just followers.

LITTLEJOHNS: Some people might ask why the European Union is not more assertive. After all you have about the same population among your fifteen members as the United States. You are economically powerful, yet you use the word "wimp". Sometimes it seems that the European Union is a bit wimpy.

PATTEN: I think if you are looking at a number of areas, if you are looking at trade, if you are looking at economic issues, if you are looking at environmental issues, we are taken very seriously indeed. If you are looking at security, nobody is in the same league as the United States. And I actually have the view personally that if we want to be taken more seriously on the big security issues, if we want to be able to develop a role as a serious counterweight and counterpart to the United States, then we have to do more for our own security. We have to be

prepared to invest more in our own security, to invest more in things like air lift capacity, to invest more in things like precision guide ammunitions, to invest more in military telecommunications and special forces. I think all that would underline that we are really serious about wanting to play a bigger role as Europeans around the world. There are at the moment I think Europeans forces involved in about ten peacekeeping operations globally. So we are not without significance as a player. But we saw in Kosovo where the real heat of the day was taken, and it was taken by American technology.

AVDOVIC: Mr. Patten, back to Iraq actually. There are some inevitable questions to be asked. What is the right strategy for Iraq right now? And if we go and see that this is diplomacy that is going to work as we saw from President Bush speech at the General Assembly that the United States government is going to go back to the UN Security Council. Is this diplomacy created, designed only to form, to produce casus belli or to create the reasonable ground for the real action of disarming Iraq?

PATTEN: I don't think anybody sensible ever wants a war. Winston Churchill again to quote him. He has been much referred to recently. Winston Churchill said that one should never, never, never -- used never three times -- underestimates the horrors of war, or the unpredictable consequences of war. So if we possibly can, we should be trying to find where in which we can deal with a clear danger without having to use military force. If you use military force, people get killed. I mean that is what it is about. People on both sides get killed. You have body bags returning home as well as people killed in Iraq or elsewhere. So what we want to try to do is to find an effective way of dealing with the issue of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and an effective way in asserting the authority of the UN. Now I am passionately in favor of multilateralism and in favor of the UN providing the moral force and the moral context in which you try to improve the world. It provides, if you like, the global rules, which the United States, as much as or more than anybody else, helped to draw up. If those global rules are consistently rejected by Saddam Hussein or by anybody else then it raises serious issues of authority. And I think that President Bush was pretty smart in saying that to the UN, when he addressed the General Assembly last Monday: "Look this is your institution, it is the world's rule making body. You can't afford to have the rules broken." So my simple answer to your question is we have to work through the UN to try to avoid the use of force.

AVDOVIC: But why now? What is the timing? Is this timing right? We have Saddam Hussein defying sixteen resolutions or so for twelve years and some people here in the United States are saying that this could be somehow politically motivated. Of course we are facing the danger of mass destruction. Why now?

PATTEN: I don't think you should underestimate the impact of September the 11th, none of us should, on the American psyche, the American psychology, and I think what happened there has made a lot Americans think that they should make absolutely certain that they are not surprised by atrocity again. And they look at the world and they see Saddam Hussein still trying to develop the most poisonous weapons and they want to do something about it. Now where does the rest of the world I think, or much of the rest of the world, finds itself able to march in step with the only super power? I think we can march in step in trying to get rid of these wicked weapons, which are in the possession of a wicked man. I don't think that the UN will vote for a resolution, which is about the wicked man. So I think if you focus on the question of weapons, and if you try to focus on Iraq compliance, you will have the broadest possible measure of support both in Europe and beyond.

LYON: But the United States has said that its policy, its goal will remain changing the regime in Baghdad, regardless of whether Saddam Hussein gives up his weapons of mass destruction, admits the weapons inspectors or what. Are you concerned that this in fact undermines the authority of the United Nations Security Council and its credibility?

PATTEN: I think it will be very important to establish that any Security Council resolution isn't a declaration of war; it is a declaration of commitment to insure that the will of the Security Council is accepted, is obeyed, is followed. I also think that most members of the Security Council would have some difficulty if you tabled a resolution saying the UN wishes to get rid of Saddam Hussein, because there are an awful lot of people in the UN, perhaps rather too many, who, some of us would also think would be, would serve the nations and the world well if they were thrown into the garbage can of history, there are, alas, too many unpleasant regimes around the place. It was noticeable that in his address to the UN, President Bush didn't talk about regime change. My position is, in so far as it matters, is that Iraq, the region, and the world would hugely benefit from regime change. But that is a matter for the people of Iraq.

LITTLEJOHNS: This is **World Chronicle**. Our guest is Christopher Patten, the European Union's External Relations Commissioner. Alistair, you have another question?

LYON: Yes. The European Union has a common position on insisting that Iraq obey UN resolutions. Now if Saddam Hussein continues to defy those demands, does the European Union also have a common position that military action is then inevitable?

PATTEN: No, we haven't gone beyond stage one as it were. My favorite hymn is Cardinal Newman's "Lead kindly light", which includes the line, "I do not seek the distant scene, one step enough for me." And I think the first step is a Security Council resolution, which would almost certainly either one or two incorporate the content of previous Security Council resolutions. Now, just jogging back to what you said about regime change, no Security Council resolutions have talked about regime change, but they have talked about an awful lot of other things, which we would like to see Saddam Hussein do. So I think the first step on which we are all agreed in the European Union is that there should be a clear declaration of the UN's purpose and policy by the Security Council, which we would then urge Saddam Hussein and all his interlocutors to urge Saddam Hussein to comply with. Beyond that there is no decision. But I just make an obvious point. If you are concerned about the authority of the UN, and it is defied even when it is so solidly expressed by the international community, what do we all do? What do people like me do, who believe passionately in multilateralism? Do we take around a petition? Do we write to Le Monde? Or the New York Times? I mean it raises pretty serious questions, and I think there is a logic, which works in both directions. If you go for a Security Council resolution, focused on the breach of previous Security Council resolutions, then that is what you are going for. Maybe compliance would lead to regime change. Maybe other things would lead to regime change. But the focus is on those Security Council resolutions. Equally, if you support that sort of Security Council resolution, but Saddam Hussein continues to defy the United Nations, then you have got to ask yourself very seriously, ok, what next?

AVDOVIC: Does that have to do -- do you actually see any parallelism with the situation of three years ago, when President Clinton on Kosovo promised somehow and announced that he is going to go to the Security Council and seek a resolution, and he didn't, but he moved forward of course with NATO allies. And right now when we also have the situation that we are talking about the regime change who is prosecuting their own people, who is greatly, gravely, doing terrible things and violating human rights, what is more important for these strategies, violation of human rights or state sovereignty?

PATTEN: Well I think it is an important question, because as Henry Kissinger would remind you if he was on this programme, since the end of the 30 years war, since the Treaty of Westphalia, international law has been based on the proposition that one state doesn't intervene militarily in the affairs of another sovereign state unless it's attacked, unless it has reason to do so for its own security. Now we've begun to take a rather more sophisticated view than that. There is an argument, which depends in my view a great deal on issues like context and intent. And we've, I think, defined three circumstances in which perhaps that doesn't apply. First of all, Kofi Annan, you might remember three years ago at the UN made an extremely interesting speech about the extent to which humanitarian crimes and by a sovereign state against its people justified intervention from outside. So you have first of all the question of humanitarian intervention. Secondly, you have the question of the possession and conceivable proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by a state, and the argument that that should in certain circumstances justify intervention, though you have to be again very careful about the context and intent of the state involved because an awful lot of countries have weapons of mass destruction. Many of them have more weapons of mass destruction than Iraq. So context and intent matter. Thirdly there is what Henry Kissinger, to go back to him again, has talked about. That is where a state uses non-state actors, such as terrorist groups to threaten another state, which Doctor Kissinger says should justify intervention. So the debate revolves around those sorts of issues. And it is clearly a debate, which is going to, whose outcome is going to determine the parameters of international law, and the parameters of the global rulebook for some years ahead. I think we've got to be – to try to work out with much greater clarity exactly what sort of rules should apply. But what is plain to me is that whatever rules apply need to be based institutionally on some sort of UN agreement, or some sort of UN mandate, but this is going to be I suspect largely what international politics is going to be discussing for the next few years.

LYON: When this contest is Iraq-unique, is it the top priority? Or does making war on Iraq distract from all kinds of other things that could be argued are just as important such as the struggle against terrorism or rebuilding Afghanistan or solving the Israeli-Palestinian dispute? The Arabs would argue that Security Council resolutions should be applied equally and if you are going to enforce them on Iraq, they should also be enforced on Israel.

PATTEN: Well, I certainly think that you ought to be very careful not to find yourself in a situation where you stand accused of double standards. I am sure about that. I also agree with

you that there are at present an awful lot of problems, which have got out of the box, and even there we are trying to deal with some of them, we haven't put them all back in the box. It was a point that Kofi Annan made in his, I thought, remarkable speech last week. I thought it was a brilliant speech not only because it was so beautifully written but I mean in a very thoughtful, well argued speech about multilateralism. You have Afghanistan, a story which is not yet completed by any mean. You have the continuing danger of a confrontation between India and Pakistan. We can't happily live in a world in which every six months you have a near military confrontation over Kashmir between those two Asian nuclear powers. We have as you said the Middle East and the desperate situation in the Palestinian territories. If you look at the Bertini report on the scale of the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East, you realize just what is happening at the moment to radicalize a new generation of young Palestinians. So it would be a tragedy if trying to deal with the issue of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, we were to so take our eye off all those other issues as to create much bigger problems than Iraq down the road. There is a limit to the number of crises that even the world's only superpower with its friends working along side it can actually deal with, and to deal with problems demands consistency and concentration and an awareness that you are in things for the long haul. If I can just make one parenthetical point, the first two years that I spent in my present job were completely dominated by the Balkans. Now nobody thinks that we are done and dusted in South East Europe, but there has been enormous progress; witness the recent elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and their outcome. But that has been the result, all of that, of the result of a huge amount of concentration by the international community, a lot of money, but sustained concentration for a period of time. There is a limit. If you have got three or four problems coming up together, there is a limit, and how much you can do to throw a fire blanket over them all.

AVDOVIC: And again Mr. Patten, when it comes to Iraq, what would be the right real strategy for Iraq, especially bearing in mind what you just mentioned, not to produce more gap between West and the Islamic World. So in which way we could get rid out of the dictator that Saddam Hussein is?

PATTEN: The best thing to happen would be for Saddam Hussein to pick up the phone and say, ok, I am going to comply with the UN resolutions, and there aren't going to be any ifs or buts, and there aren't going to be any caveats.

LITTLEJOHNS: Do you really think that?

PATTEN: And Mr. Blix can come back as soon as he likes. Well, it depends whether you believe that Saddam Hussein operates on the basis of any sort of rationality. If he does, that's what he should do, because the consequences, if he doesn't for both him and his country, are I think pretty dire. So that is what I think should happen in Iraq. You raised a broader question, which I think is deeply worrying: it has become a cliché to talk about Samuel Huntington's views on the clash of civilizations. We should avoid as much as we can making that thesis self-fulfilling. But if you look at the sort of work that has been done by the Pew Research center, for example, on attitudes in Islamic countries to the West, to Europe and to America, I think it is deeply worrying. And I think we do have to work very closely with the Islamic world in order to prevent the gulf between us widening.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Patten, that's all the time we have. Thank you for being with us on this edition of **World Chronicle**. Our guest has been Christopher Patten, the European Union's External Relations Commissioner. He was interviewed by Erol Avdovic of Deutsche Welle, and Alister Lyon of Reuters. I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **World Chronicle**.

ANNOUNCER: Transcripts of this programme can be obtained free of charge by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **World Chronicle**, United Nations, Room S-827, New York, N.Y., 10017.

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